

YAHOO! TRAVEL

Five Miles Up with ... Sunny Garcia

By [Bekah Wright](#) | [Compass](#) – Tue, Feb 5, 2013 12:41 PM EST

Sunny Garcia's been catching waves since he was 7 years old, which seems only natural for a kid born on Oahu. His mad surfing skills quickly led to competitions and victories. A few on the list – reigning International Surfing Association (ISA) World Masters champion, a record-breaking six Hawaiian Triple Crown of Surfing championship titles, and a former Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) World Champion, holding 22 major titles. Now, at 43 and a grandfather, Garcia's still staking a claim on the winner's podium while competing on some of the world's best beaches. His favorite? FMU finds out.

Window or aisle?

I sleep really well on planes, so I like being near the window where no one can wake me up.

Carry-on or check-in?

Carry-on.

What's something you never fail to pack in your suitcase?

Clean underwear and socks.

Do you bring food on the plane?

I always bring a bunch of snacks – Sour Patch Kids.

What's your idea of the perfect vacation?

Surfers travel nine to 10 months out of the year, so for me, going back home to Oahu is the perfect vacation. Hawaii is warm, the waves are always good, we've got good hotels and food, and the people are always nice.

Where would you take someone visiting your hometown?

When you go to Oahu, I know a lot of rental car and travel agencies tell you not to go to the West Side. To me, it's one of the most beautiful places. Makaha Beach is my home break, which is beautiful. During the day it's really mellow and the people are nice. Just make sure you don't leave your valuables in the car.

Have you been on a vacation recently that rates close to heading home?

I went to Nicaragua recently for a surf contest. The people and beaches were really nice, so it was more like a vacation than work. I stayed and surfed at Playa Colorado. The vacation rental house was really nice and relatively cheap.

What's the worst vacation you've ever been on?

I get to surf and hang out, so I don't think there's anything such as a bad vacation.

Favorite place (other than your home beach) to surf?

It's a toss-up between Fiji and Queensland, Australia. Fiji is a beautiful place in the Pacific where you can go and just do nothing. In Queensland, the people are nice and they have great casinos, nightclubs, food and really good waves.

What's the silliest souvenir you've ever come back with?

I brought home a poncho from Mexico. My wife wasn't too happy with it, but I like it.

Ever try a food that you wished you hadn't?

I'm really picky about my food, so I haven't tried anything I don't like yet.

Hawaii's known for its food. Anything you have to have when you touch down?

A good plate lunch. I get the Loco Moco plate with a hamburger, fried eggs and gravy. Or the beef stew plate. You can get most of the dishes in other places, but they're not quite the same as in Hawaii.

Favorite hotel?

My favorite place is the Crowne Plaza in Melbourne, Australia. When we go down to Melbourne for the surf events and have a couple of flat days, we head to the Crowne Plaza for its nightclub and casino.

Biggest regret you've ever had while on vacation.

When I'm traveling, I always do as much as I can, so I have no regrets.

The one thing you're willing to splurge on above all else.

I'm always willing to pay good money for a nice hotel. There's nothing worse than staying in a hotel that's not that great. A good hotel is key to a good time.



(Photo: Courtesy of GoPro)

Who’s on your travel playlist?

Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole, Linkin Park and Def Leppard.

You only get one more trip in your lifetime. Where will it be?

Zarautz, a little town in Spain outside of San Sebastian. I go there every year. It’s super nice – really quiet, fun waves and nice people.

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